RDS Center E-Newsletter

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Useful Links:

RDS Center
The home page for the RDS Center web site
http://rds.cms.hhs.gov

CMS Coordination of Benefits/VDSA Web Site
The home page for information on submitting retiree files through the Voluntary Data Sharing Agreement
http://www.cms.hhs.gov/ medicare/cob/default.asp

CMS Employer Page
A page on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Web Site specifically for employers
http://www.cms.hhs.gov/ medicarereform/pdbma/employer .asp

Contact Us

http://rds.cms.hhs.gov

(877) RDS-HELP or

(877) 737-4357

(877)RDS-TTY0 or

(877) 737-8890

Important Application Information

If you have not already done so, CMS strongly encourages Plan Sponsors to begin the application process **immediately** to avoid the risk of an unexpected delay causing them to miss the application deadline. If you have not started the RDS Secure Web Site registration and application processes, you should do so **today**. The Account Manager, Actuary(s), and Authorized Representatives **all** need to go through the process of registering as a Secure Web Site user before the application can be completed. The entire registration and application processes may take up to **10 days**. For more information on how to apply to the RDS Program, go to http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/apply.htm.

Just a reminder that applications may be submitted to RDS Center **without** a retiree file. The application will be processed and granted a conditional approval if all application requirements are satisfied. However, the retiree list **must** be submitted to the RDS Center by the application deadline of 10/31/2005. Keep in mind the initial retiree file due by 10/31/2005 should include the retiree information you have to date. If you have outstanding retiree information that prohibits you from sending an individual with the initial retiree file, you can send that information during the monthly retiree file update process.

Since **Authorized Representatives** are required to submit the application, they are the **only user role** that has access to the Plan Sponsor agreement page and the **Submit** button in the Secure Web Site. For step-by-step instructions on how to submit an application to the RDS Center using the Secure Web Site, go to http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/submit.htm. Again, these instructions are only applicable to Authorized Representatives.

Extension requests are **not necessary** for plan years ending in 2006. CMS has granted an automatic extension for all Plan Sponsors until October 31, 2005. Plan sponsors do not have to submit anything to request an extension.

For plan years ending in 2007, Plan Sponsors must submit an application before the application-filing deadline (no later than 90 days prior to the beginning of the plan benefit year). For more information on application extensions go to http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/apply.htm.

RDS National Teleconference

The RDS Center hosted a National Teleconference for Plan Sponsors and interested parties on September 29, 2005. The objective of this call was to give the public an opportunity to learn more about the RDS program and provide them with an update on RDS Policy and Operations. Prior to the National Teleconference the RDS Center solicited topics/issues/questions from the public. The RDS Center received over 200 e-mails from individuals with topic suggestions, and many of those e-mails were used to develop the content for the National Teleconference. Thanks to all those who responded! Your feedback helped make the Teleconference a major success with over 1,600 participants from all over the United States. To view the National Teleconference Power Point presentation and transcript, go to http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/events/national_teleconf.htm.

The RDS Center is planning another National Teleconference in November to discuss the RDS Payment Process. Continue to check the RDS Program Web Site (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/) for more information.

RDS Program Web Site: A Web of Information

Do you have questions about the RDS program? Not sure where to go to have them answered? Good news – help is available! The RDS Center has a "one stop shop" for information regarding the RDS Program.

The RDS Program Web Site (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/) is the most current and readily available source of information. On the web site you will find detailed information about the application process, answers to frequently asked questions, upcoming RDS events, and source material for the legal and regulatory authority for the RDS program. You will also find a variety of topic-specific reference documents including, How To Use the Secure Web Site Mailbox (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/mailbox.htm), How To Apply (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/apply.htm), How To Use the Retiree Sample Spreadsheet (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/samplesheet.htm), Retiree List Information (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/how_to_apply/RetireeListsFromPlanSponsors.pdf?cache=n), How To Request an Extension (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/request_extension.htm), How To Attest Actuarial Equivalence (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/actuary.htm), and How To Assign Designees (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/assign_designees.htm), and How to Submit an Application (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/submit.htm).

The RDS Program Web Site (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/) is updated weekly so make sure to check it periodically to keep up with this fast

paced program.

New RDS Web Site Functionality

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is pleased to announce the addition of new functionality to the Retiree Drug Subsidy (RDS) Center online application. Effective September 26, 2005 plan sponsors can send retiree files to the RDS Center, receive retiree response files from the RDS Center, appeal a denied application (i.e., an informal written reconsideration, http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/appeals.htm#how1), and request an extension (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/news/fact_sheets/request_extension.htm), for applications with plan years ending in 2007 and beyond.

RDS Payment Update

The RDS Center is continuing to develop the requirements and specifications for the RDS payment process. In the September 23, 2005 Federal Register CMS issued for emergency clearance the RDS Payment and Reconciliation specifications and instructions. Comments on the collection must be submitted to CMS by October 22, 2005. To access the Federal Register notice, go to http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/pdf/05-19070.pdf. To access accompanying supporting statement and related forms go to http://www.cms.hhs.gov/regulations/pra.

Check the RDS Program Web Site for news of upcoming events or announcements on the topic of payment.

Helpful Tips

This section is intended to provide you with helpful tips about relevant RDS topics. The focus of this 'Helpful Tips' section is the RDS registration and application processes.

- Regardless of how many Plan Sponsors an individual is working with, each Secure Web Site user may only have one login ID.

- An Account Manager should only use the <<Create an Account Manager>> link from the RDS Program Web Site **one time**. After the initial registration process, Account Managers can add new Plan Sponsors within the Secure Web Site.

- Actuaries must be sure to provide their name and American Academy of Actuaries membership number to the Plan Sponsor and the RDS Center *exactly* as it is in the American Academy of Actuaries database. If there is any question please contact the Academy before proceeding.

- Since the retiree file can be sent *either before or after* an application is submitted, the status of the Manage Retiree application section on the Application Status page is not

applicable. The Manage Retiree application section will not update to a completed status, even if the retiree file is uploaded to the RDS Secure Mailbox. The incomplete status of the Manage Retiree application section does not affect your ability to submit your application to the RDS Center.

- Please be sure to enter critical data such as e-mail address, SSN, date of birth, and name correctly in the RDS Secure Web Site.

- The Plan year start and end dates should be the effective and termination dates for the plan—not the dates for which you are requesting the subsidy. For example, if your Plan start and end dates are June 1, 2005 – May 30, 2006, those are the dates you use for your Plan start and end dates in the RDS Program application.